

VZCZCXRO8014
OO RUEHBC RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHNE #0483/01 0451059
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 141059Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0442
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 6019
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7541
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000483

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [PBTS](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [NP](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: SENIOR INDIAN POLICE OFFICER REVIEWS NEPAL BORDER SECURITY

Classified By: Deputy PolCouns Atul Keshap for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Director General (DG) of the Indian Border Guard Force (Sashastra Seema Bal or "SSB") Gopal Sharma told DepPolCouns that many competing forces, including the Maoists, Young Communist League (YCL), Muslim extremists and competing Madhesi groups were stirring unrest along the Indo-Nepal border. He said he thought the agitation would lessen following Constituent Assembly elections in April, and that he hoped India's relationship with Nepal would stabilize at that time, noting that local Indian and Nepali security forces continued to work well together. Kashmiri terrorists used Nepal as a gateway to India, but did not bring high-tech weapons with them, he relayed. Gopal, a former Chief of Police in Jammu and Kashmir, said he thought the insurgency had died down considerably in Kashmir, but conjectured that it would not take much for terrorist attacks to begin anew in the region. Almost every terrorist incident in India has a Kashmiri connection, the DG contended. END SUMMARY.

Unrest on Indo-Nepal Border Has Many Sources

2. (C) DG of the SSB Gopal Sharma told DepPolCouns February 12 that, though the YCL had been actively agitating along the Indo-Nepal border, he thought the unrest would lessen considerably following Constituent Assembly elections in April. Sharma warned that a rising movement of Islamic extremism along the border was becoming increasingly active, bringing the threat of incursion. Ethnic Indian Madhesi activists continued to stir up trouble as well, Sharma acknowledged, but noted that the different Madhesi groups were not unified, and that, despite some of them having a pro-India stance, they preferred to seek assistance from others rather than Indian authorities. Asked if the Maoists' reinstatement of its United People's Revolutionary Council (UPRC) was causing new problems for the border region, Sharma responded that it was a major challenge for the SSB, and pondered whether the Maoists intended to continue operating the parallel government structure (aka "People's Governments") post-election.

No Antagonism toward Nepal

13. (C) "Our hope is that, when elections are over, our relationship with Nepal will stabilize, even if the Maoists are in power," Sharma commented, opining that it was important that the Government of India (GOI) not impart a patronizing attitude toward Nepal. India shared a positive working relationship with the local administrations on the Nepali side of the border, Sharma observed, noting that Nepali police had taken shelter with SSB forces when Nepalese police stations were burned during riots over the past year. Though the Government of Nepal (GON)'s current stance was "not clean," Indian security forces had a history of good relations with its Nepali counterparts and the Nepal Army, affirmed Sharma. "There is no antagonism in our relationship with Nepal," he underlined, relating that he had talked with Nepal's Home Secretary regarding creating border posts and that Nepal had created its own version of the SSB.

Kashmiri Terrorists Pass through Nepal, but Leave the Weapons at Home

14. (C) Asked whether terrorists used Nepal as a conduit to India, Sharma indicated that Kashmiri terrorists were crossing the Indo-Nepal border. The SSB was recovering weapons from the border area every week, he said, but they were simple and somewhat crude, unlike high-tech weapons such as AK-47s, he averred, implying that weapons of that caliber remain in Kashmir. Though there was some movement of Naxalites in the region, it was small and relatively insignificant, he reported.

The Chinese Are Moving In

NEW DELHI 00000483 002 OF 002

15. (C) Assessing Chinese intentions in Nepal, Sharma indicated that, while the YCL appeared to identify with Chinese idealism, the SSB had not come across Chinese groups in the border region. (Note: Indian media has recently reported a sudden proliferation of "China Study Centers" along the Indo-Nepal border. End note.) Sharma lamented that, while the Nepalese were happy to allow China to build a railway from China to Nepal, they balked at allowing the Indians to build a road from Nepal to West Bengal. "We have built many beautiful roads in Nepal," he attested, "but objection is coming from the other side" on linking those roads with India.

India's Soft Power

16. (C) Drawing upon his experience as Director General of the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police, Sharma elucidated that the civilian population on the Indo-Nepal border had different needs from that on the Indo-Pakistan border. It was important, he emphasized, to engage the Nepalese and to protect them from the propaganda promulgated by Naxalites and Nepali groups with competing interests. Sharma described how Indian authorities had successfully engaged the civilian population within J&K and in Arunachal Pradesh (AP) by adopting schools, bringing children to New Delhi for education, and teaching them Hindi, which, as a result, had become the most common language in far northeastern AP.

"Every Terrorist Incident Has a Kashmiri Connection"

17. (C) Turning to Kashmir, Sharma posited that almost every terrorist incident in India had a Kashmiri connection. Still, suicide attacks and car bombs in J&K had markedly decreased, Sharma avowed, conjecturing that the capacity for insurgent activity had declined by 40 per cent. However, equipment and ammunition were readily

available
inside Kashmir, meaning that no fresh infiltration was
necessary in order for new terrorist attacks to take place;
all that was needed was someone to organize it, he
expounded.

A Changing Role for the SSB

18. (C) Comment: The SSB, created as a counterweight to China's encroachment on India in the early 1960's, has only operated on the Indo-Nepal border since 2001. Formerly known as a tool for Indian intelligence to counter Chinese influence, Sharma claimed that its portfolio had changed and that it was now purely a security force. This does not necessarily quell Nepali suspicion of the organization, however. India's soft power model, carried out in part by the SSB, has worked well in AP, J&K, and its northeastern territories to maintain an Indian identity for its far-flung inhabitants, keeping Indian feet solidly on the Indian side of the border. India's expertise in this area, combined with USG experience in maintaining safe borders, is a potential area of cooperation that has not yet been fully explored. End comment.

19. (U) This message has been coordinated with Embassy Kathmandu.

WHITE